

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
DOWNTOWN LIVABILITY  
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

December 18, 2013  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-120

MEMBERS PRESENT: Aaron Laing, Ernie Simas, co-chairs; Patrick Bannon, Michael Chaplin, Mark D'Amato, Hal Ferris, Gary Guenther, Trudi Jackson, Loretta Lopez, Lee Maxwell, Erin Powell

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brad Helland, Jan Stout, Ming Zhang

OTHERS PRESENT: Dan Stroh, Emil King, Patti Wilma, Chris Salomone, Department of Planning and Community Development

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA, APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Co-chair Laing called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Bannon. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jackson and it carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the November 20, 2013, meeting minutes was made by Ms. Maxwell. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bannon and it carried unanimously.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Kim Radcliff, president of the Eastside Heritage Center Board of Trustees, thanked the committee for keeping in mind the importance of preserving and sharing Bellevue's past and the important role history can play in providing a sense of place for a community. She said there is a wide range of means of sharing the community's history with the public, including interpretive signage, preservation of historic structures and/or features, building design elements and historic images. Providing the opportunity and flexibility in the bonus amenity system for private, public and non-profit partnerships will be critical to the success of promoting Downtown Bellevue as the cultural hub of the Eastside. Hopefully in the not-too-distant future the Eastside Heritage Center will find a permanent home providing the community with the opportunity to experience the Bellevue story past, present and future.

Mr. Bruce Carlson, a new Downtown Bellevue resident, said he could not tell from reading the Downtown Parking Report whether or not the demand represents what

developers want or what the market wants. He said he was struck by the low number of parking places relative to condominium units. If a two-person family wanting to live Downtown can find a condominium that offers only one parking space, they likely will look elsewhere. In many cases, where folks are willing to pay for another parking space they find them unavailable. Most of those who buy a condominium in the Downtown that has either limited or no parking have already reduced their commuting needs, but those who must commute elsewhere will not even consider living in the Downtown. There also is not enough parking to accommodate visitors.

Ms. Holly Golden with the law firm Hillis, Clark, Martin & Peterson spoke representing a national retailer that supports a market-based approach to parking requirements. She said it makes sense for the City to consider extending the possible reduction or reconsideration of parking requirements to areas immediately adjacent to the Downtown. The same logic for reducing parking in the Downtown applies to the adjacent areas and would prevent unintended park and ride conditions just outside the Downtown.

Mr. Stu Vander Hoek, 9 103rd Avenue NE, said the Land Use Code provides that new or existing businesses do not have to provide parking for the first 1,500 square feet of their business space. That forces a credit or allowance in the parking requirement calculation. The code change was introduced in response to the 1986 Old Bellevue study where reducing the parking requirements for retail was called for. What has transpired since the code change is that new development projects have underparked or provided no retail parking by keeping their retail spaces under 1,500 square feet. Developers and businesses are taking advantage of the code, and City staff have misinterpreted the intent of the 1986 study recommendations. The effect has been an increase in retail and restaurant space with no or very little accompanying new parking supply. The Key Condominium building has approximately total 5,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space but provides no parking for those businesses; the result is impacts for every other business on the street. The One Main and Astoria condominium buildings have similar situations; the minimal parking provided by the building is often utilized by employees. When the use is a restaurant instead of retail, or changes during the life of the building, the problem is compounded because of the higher parking demand for a restaurant. Sidewalk restaurant seating adds to the problem. Typically, the parking requirement for restaurants compared to retail is 2.5 times higher at ten stalls per thousand square feet. He said the notion of not having to provide parking for the first 1,500 square feet was his idea in the early 1980s when many existing retailers wanted to expand and stay in Old Bellevue but they could not because of the requirement to provide new parking for the expansion space. Since the code was changed the City has provided the credit for restaurant uses to uses for which the credit was never intended. The 1986 report included the statement that a variety of responses to future parking needs recognizes that land available for parking will be increasingly limited as development occurs, and the combination of approaches will distribute public parking throughout the district and reinforce the pedestrian scale and intimate atmosphere of the district. The report went on to stress the need to adopt the set of recommendations in their entirety, and said that utilizing some but not all of the recommendations will not comprehensively address the district's parking needs. The 1,500 square foot credit should be removed; parking requirements should be established

for outdoor sidewalk seating and conditional use permits that can be controlled by using outside parking agreements; and tighter code requirements should be established for off-site parking requirements with ongoing compliance.

Mayor Lee took a moment to wish everyone a happy holiday season.

### 3. OVERVIEW OF TATEUCHI CENTER

John Haynes, Tateuchi Center Executive Director and CEO, said the facility is an element that will contribute to enriching the livability of Downtown Bellevue. The project was originally called Performing Arts Center Eastside (PACE). The architectural design is something to be proud of, and the center will have a positive economic impact, but at the end of the day the center will promote the arts at the intersection of community, education and commerce. The building itself will be a loom on which the fabric of a strong, more vibrant and more livable community can be woven.

The arts are not merely a luxury, a thrill or an amenity. They are the best evidence of something transcendent in humanity and an indispensable element of every human society. Human spirits would shrivel without the arts. There is no nation, race or tribe on the face of the earth that does not celebrate its identity in song and dance. The arts are reminders of the fact that the essential human requirements are not power and glory but courage and compassion, and that humans are more than the sum of their possessions and achievements.

From the beginnings of recorded history humans have expressed their deepest longings, their fears and their sorrows through the arts. People sing at public events and thus feel connected to one another. People dance at weddings, are moved by movies, and find inspiration in concert halls. The arts are an essentially unifying form. While people create art, the arts create the human experience by offering the means to understand and share a common conception of what it means to be human and alive. The arts can explain what it means to be different while at the same time showing what humans have universally in common. No undertaking has more potential for community building or for the creation of a civil, safe, creative and livable city than the arts.

Mr. Haynes asked the committee members to imagine a time in the not-so-distant future when in addition to a shiny array of retail attractions and commercial entertainment, the people who live and work in Downtown Bellevue, and indeed the residents of the entire City, the Eastside and the entire region will enjoy a hundred performances per year by the world's most celebrated and renowned artists in a world-class concert hall in the very heart of the City.

The Tateuchi Center is predicated on the notion that the Eastside needs a cultural heart; that the Tateuchi Center is the right project and Bellevue is the right place for it; that the center will reconnect and expand Eastside audiences; that it will transform the cultural life of the entire region; that it will create significant economic growth; and that it will enhance Bellevue's emerging identity as a great city.

Mr. Haynes said when first invited to come to Bellevue for the PACE project, he was not familiar with the area. He said his immediate sense that was there is no “there” for the Eastside. He said he learned, however, that when viewed as a single city the Eastside is the 29th largest city in America. The Eastside is home to 600,000 residents, home to 18 of the state’s top 20 zip codes for wealth, and is where families live. Eastside residents are diverse and well educated. The Eastside has, however, no major performing arts facility.

It can be concluded that the Eastside simply is not finished: it is in a state of becoming. It can also be argued that Downtown Bellevue is the downtown of the Eastside, a role it will continue to play as the Eastside continues to develop into a more dense area. Downtown Bellevue is poised for explosive growth that will by 2040 include a 282 percent increase in the number of residents living in the Downtown. A recent article in the *Seattle Times* focused on Bellevue said the City’s identity involves quality niche urbanism with good civic design, mixed use districts, unique local businesses, a variety of architecture that connects people at the street level, abundant transit and convenient neighborhoods, and quality density that enhances environmental sustainability.

Mr. Haynes said the Tateuchi Center can be a hub that will make Downtown Bellevue and the entire Eastside area more livable. The primary beneficiary of the facility will be Downtown Bellevue and the people who live, work and invest there. It will rise at the intersection of 106th Avenue NE and NE 10th Street with covered access from both streets. It will have iconic architecture and will be a LEED gold facility. It will be a pivot point for pedestrian traffic both day and night, a cultural beacon, and a source of pride for the City. It will be easily accessible and will have plenty of free parking. The center has been designed to be open to the public during the business day as well as in connection with performances, something that is in fact very unusual. The center is anticipated to serve almost 3.5 million patrons during its first ten years. The one hundred annual performances will involve diversity in programming relative to genre, size and price. Some 150 days annually will be reserved for regional and local users, including Eastside and Bellevue arts groups and other commercial and non-commercial users. The budget includes \$600,000 per year for arts education and outreach programs, most of which will be conducted through alliances with existing youth-serving organizations. The concert hall will have a 2,000-seat capacity; the cabaret will have a 250-seat capacity; and a 5,000-square-foot patron’s lounge. The concert hall will be among the most technologically advanced in the country.

Mr. Haynes said the Tateuchi Center addresses several of the guiding principles established by the City Council for the Downtown Livability Advisory Committee, including a distinctive and memorable skyline; a great urban environment; liveliness and street presence with an engaging pedestrian environment; spaces for public events; sustainability and green building; a safe and supportive environment for Bellevue’s increasingly diverse population; aesthetically pleasing buildings with high-quality design and materials; and the “City in a Park” concept that was used as a guiding metaphor for the interior design.

Ms. Lopez noted that Meydenbauer Center has been supported financially by the City. She asked what effect the Tateuchi Center will have on Meydenbauer Center. Mr. Haynes said the nature of the two facilities differ to the point where Tateuchi Center will have little or no impact on the theater at Meydenbauer Center, which seats just over 400. Meydenbauer Center was never intended to be a performance space for music and as such the acoustics are not ideal; it is an excellent venue for plays and speeches.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Ferris, Mr. Haynes said the Tateuchi Center project moved away from being an entirely private initiative some six years ago when the City made a \$2 million contribution. To date, the combined contributions from the state, county and City total some \$8.5 million. To that degree, the project is a public/private partnership. City and county staff and elected officials have over the past six months been engaged in talks about a larger investment in what will ultimately be a region-serving cultural organization. There has never been a suggestion, however, that the City would have any participation in the operating costs of the center.

Mr. Ferris said one concern he has is that the entrance to the center is largely inwardly focused on private development. There are no doors that come out onto 106th Avenue NE and very little porosity on the perimeter. It would seem that where there is a true public/private partnership the facility would be more open to the public street. Mr. Haynes said visually the design is porous and open, but from a structural standpoint it was possible to put an entrance in the Winter Garden and on NE 10th Street. The structural nature of a theater requires that the first floor be some distance above grade.

Mr. Bannon asked if the center will be usable by private corporate entities that do not have a performance art orientation. Mr. Haynes said it will be. Interest has already been shown by a large global software company. The problem in Washington state, however, is that cultural arts organizations who are property owners are exempt from property tax, unless they allow a commercial user to use the property for more than 15 days in a calendar year. Should the Tateuchi Center open to commercial uses for 16 days per year, the entire exemption would be lost at a cost of nearly one million dollars. The law used to allow only seven days a year, counting load in and load out time, which meant effectively a site could be used only three days each year. Mr. Haynes said he would like to see the limitation go away entirely because opening the doors to commercial interests is one way cultural organizations can take pressure off their operating budgets.

Answering a question asked by Co-chair Laing, Mr. Haynes said there remains a funding gap of some \$115 million.

Ms. Maxwell asked if any other Eastside jurisdictions have shown an interest in becoming a partner to the project. Mr. Haynes said none have. He said his personal experience has been that when one jurisdiction decides to do something big, surrounding jurisdictions express joy that they do not have to pay for it. The jurisdiction that needs to be involved, aside from Bellevue, is King County because of the regional role the facility will play. Seattle-based groups are losing their Eastside-resident audiences at the rate of

almost ten percent per year and as such are very interested in offering programming in Tateuchi Center.

#### 4. DOWNTOWN PARKING

Co-chair Simas introduced a panel of individuals to help address the issue of parking in the Downtown. The panel members were John Su, president of Su Development; Dan Meyers, senior vice-president for design and construction for Kemper Development Company; David Schooler, president of Sterling Realty Organization; and Gil Kelley, principal with Gil Kelley & Associates.

Planning Director Dan Stroh allowed that parking is a deceptively complicated topic. Parking impacts development economics given that construction costs of \$50,000 per stall for underground parking is not an unusual number, and given that \$25,000 to \$30,000 per stall is normal for above-ground structures. Convenience for the user is a major parking factor as well. Parking also affects travel behavior and plays a major role in the choices commuters make relative to mode split. The utilization of land for parking can have a big impact on development project design and the qualities of urban places.

There are several ways the City influences the parking issue. On-street parking makes use of City right-of-way. Bellevue has constructed parking for Downtown Park and Meydenbauer Center, but many cities choose to construct public parking garages for shared use. The Land Use Code regulations affecting private development certainly have an impact on parking.

Downtown Bellevue has a massive parking supply. According to the most recent update from the Puget Sound Regional Council, there are some 48,500 parking stalls in the Downtown. To get the most efficient use possible of the supply would require better coordination through the voluntary efforts of the owners of the parking supply, which is not something the City has control over.

Continuing, Mr. Stroh said things change over time. The Downtown has been steadily evolving, yet the City has not adjusted the parking ratios for decades even though the Downtown is a very different place from what it was in 1981 when the Downtown Code was adopted. The area is far denser and is currently home to some 10,500 residents. Some who live and/or work in the Downtown have decided they do not need or want to drive alone.

If anything, parking is a balancing act. Some of the factors in the current parking philosophy include the need to be competitive, the need to provide for the needs of users, the need to control spillover parking in the residential areas near the Downtown, and the issue of forcing development to build more parking than is required. The City is also concerned about overbuilding the supply of parking for commuters, something that could have a big impact on mode split and congestion in the Downtown. The City encourages shared parking within and between developments.

Parking need differs by use. A sufficient supply of visitor parking is needed to ensure the vitality of retail and commercial uses. The park once strategy is predicated on the idea of permitting visitors to park once and then walk around the Downtown to different establishments without having to move their cars every so often. Parking is needed to provide for the needs of Downtown residents, but the City is concerned about imposing an unnecessary burden by requiring more parking than is actually needed. Parking for commuters is needed, but the relationship between parking supply and mode split must be recognized. Across the board for all users, the City holds the view that shared parking is a good thing.

Mr. Kelley said parking is one of the most controversial issues in the planning and development conversation. In part, the controversy results from the anxiety people have about being able to access what they want. Parking is not, however, an end in itself; it is simply a way to facilitate access to places and uses. Parking does play into the question of travel mode which people answer most often by choosing the most convenient, least expensive and most reliable option. Cities existed without cars for a very long time. In cities across the nation the vision is once again shifting away from a reliance on automobiles.

In San Francisco people are beginning to flock to the city core, particularly younger high-skill, high-wage people. Many Silicon Valley high tech companies are following their workers and constructing new office buildings in San Francisco. They have found that their workers care less about owning a car than they do about having walkable and livable neighborhoods. Similar investments are being made in Bellevue for the same reasons.

Mr. Kelley said both San Francisco and Portland have decades of experience in providing reliable public transportation in the form of rail. The Seattle area has been slower to fully implement a system, but the fact that light rail is coming to Bellevue will begin to transform travel patterns.

The committee members were urged to put the parking equation into the context of livability. One element of livability is convenience, and for many parking is associated with the notion of convenience. Livability can also mean a lack of landscape dominated by automobiles and the provision of travel options.

The demand for parking is influenced by a number of dynamic factors. Some want to live close to work, and that group demands less parking. The provision of convenient transit options lessens the demand for parking. Tenant needs, including their perception of their needs, influences parking demand. Economic factors, including travel costs, influences the demand for parking. On the supply side there are an equal number of dynamic factors, including the number of parking spaces, access to those spaces, and the arrangement of parking spaces. With regard to the latter, Portland has moved away from marking on-street parking spaces, the result of which has been an increase in the parking supply given that small cars take up less space. Some cities are also looking towards stacked parking. The management of the parking supply along with the on-street/off-street balance of

parking, pricing, and the cost of building parking are also dynamic factors on the supply side of the equation.

Where parking supplies are tightened, for whatever reason, the demand shifts to other modes of travel. Generally, parking ratios are a very small part of the equation that is at the disposal of public policy makers. Managing the on-street supply and encouraging the cooperative management of the private off-street supply are actions cities can take. The parking ratios really only apply in new construction or major changes of use, which is a relatively small subset of the parking supply issue.

In Portland an enforced cap was put on parking in the 1970s when the EPA determined the city was violating air quality standards for too many days each year. In addition to capping the parking supply, the city focused on providing better bus service. The result was a growth in downtown housing and jobs and flat growth in parking spaces. Over time more transit and walkability has been layered in. The number of new parking spaces created has been very small. The minimum parking requirement for office in Downtown Bellevue is close to two spaces per thousand square feet and a maximum of 2.7. By comparison, in Portland there is no minimum requirement and a maximum of 0.7. On the residential side, there are some situations without a parking requirement, though in most cases the minimum is closer to one stall per unit and the maximum is two; in Portland there is no minimum and the maximum is 1.35. Retail in Bellevue is required to have between 3.3 and 4.0 parking stalls per thousand square feet and there is no maximum; in Portland there is no minimum and the maximum is one.

Mr. Kelley urged the committee members to look to the future that will include light rail, and to think about the regional mode split goals. Rather than forcing people out of their cars, people should be given options.

Mr. Su reminded the committee that land use planning is a long-term action that looks out 30 to 40 years. In planning for the future, it makes sense to look at those who are young now because it is their community that is being planned. Studies show that fewer and fewer of the younger generation are choosing to own cars. If the expectation is that this trend will continue, City planners should be cautious in establishing parking ratios. The problem is that the code under which developers must operate is 30 years old. Flexibility will be very important going forward, but it will be particularly important to periodically update the code to reflect trends.

Mr. Su said codes are written to provide the most public safety possible. Beyond that the code is written to outline the minimums. Developers, however, are more concerned with what the market wants.

Mr. Su said his first project in Bellevue, Ashwood Commons condominium, was constructed in 1992 and included 1.8 parking stalls per unit, as well as 2,000 square feet of retail with some additional parking. The Palazzo development had only 1.6 stalls per unit. Subsequent developments had 1.38 and 1.1 stalls per unit. Clearly the demand for parking by tenants has been reduced over time. He said one-third of his residential



tenants work in Downtown Bellevue and many of those who have cars choose to park them at their offices instead.

Parking is only one part of urban design. Off-street parking cannot solve all the problems. Each type of use, whether it be office, retail or residential, has different parking needs. In the future there can either be more parking, less parking, or the same amount of parking, but it should be kept in mind that the decisions made now will directly impact what the City will look like in the future. What is needed is a clear vision relative to how much parking there should be.

Mr. Meyers said parking is very important to the Bellevue Collection, which includes Bellevue Square, Lincoln Square and Bellevue Place. The three developments account for 10,000 of Downtown Bellevue's parking stalls. Kemper Development Company believes that parking will continue to be a very important need in the future. Feedback is received almost daily from retail customers, office tenants, from residents and from hotel guests about parking, and from time to time consultants are retained to study the parking issue as well.

Mr. Meyers agreed that parking needs vary by use. Kemper Development Company has always felt that good retail is the most important element of a good urban environment, and successful retail requires pleasurable parking experiences. To that end, Kemper Development Company spends a lot of time thinking about how customers come to its retail properties. The company sees parking as a positive rather than a detriment and has chosen to integrate good parking into its overall master plan as one key element of good urban design. Parking should be easy to access, and once parked, people should be able to become pedestrians and easily access other Downtown destinations.

Kemper Development Company continues to construct office buildings and hears often from tenants about parking needs. On average office tenants are still needing 2.5 to 3.0 stalls per thousand square feet. Kemper Development Company encourages its office tenants to commute by using a variety of modes, but at the end of the day the focus is on making it easy for everyone to choose for themselves. Good transit is needed both locally and regionally, but until there is a well-integrated system tenants are going to continue to need parking for their cars.

Bellevue is a subregional city to Seattle, which is an international city. Bellevue, though, is clearly the downtown for the Eastside. The Eastside covers some 300 square miles and is home to 600,000 people, which clearly is not very dense. Far more density will be required before the residents can fully rely on transit.

Mr. Meyers said the code as it relates to the Downtown has worked pretty well over the past 30 years, but it is certainly time to update it. Going forward, consideration should be given to updating the code far more often to accommodate trends. To allow the construction of residential building without requiring parking is not wise in the current environment. Mixed use retail can also be built without any parking, which is also unwise. Each property should be required to provide the right amount of parking to

accommodate their portion of the market. The Downtown would benefit from having public garages constructed either close to the freeway or in Old Bellevue. Shared parking is a good way to be efficient.

Mr. Schooler said Bellevue's office market is fragile. Firms can choose to locate in a number of places within the region. Siting considerations will include parking and transit options. Bellevue has far better bus service than it used to, but even so the service it enjoys are not adequate, and parking in Downtown Bellevue is not overly abundant. The decisions Bellevue makes about parking could ultimately drive companies to choose other jurisdictions. The market should be allowed to decide so that Bellevue will continue to be competitive. The maximum parking ratios in the Downtown should not be reduced, though it would be acceptable to reduce the minimums to allow developers to experiment with less parking as things change over time.

Mr. Schooler voiced serious reservations regarding the consultant's study that was included in the committee's packet. He said South Lake Union is served by good bus service, but the argument that it is served by light rail is harder to make. If it is concluded that South Lake Union is in fact served by rail, then it must be concluded that every comparable city in the study is also served by rail. Bellevue does not have rail yet, so reducing the maximum parking ratio based on transit service that is still ten years in the future would not be wise.

It used to be that office development could count on having one employee for every 200 square feet. The current trend, however, is toward far more density, as low as one per 100 square feet. There are far more people walking in the Downtown, and in time there will be even more, but currently the trend for increased office density argues in favor of more parking.

The study suggests that parking in Downtown Bellevue is heavily subsidized. A developer seeking a six percent return on a \$50,000 parking stall would need to charge \$360 per month for it. To put the entire burden on an employee who previously had to pay nothing for it could be a factor in companies choosing to locate elsewhere. Portland is a central city and enjoys good transit service, both bus and rail, and does not have highrise competition; Bellevue does not have that luxury. Bellevue is a much younger city and is still becoming what it will be, and the market should be allowed to control the parking supply.

Co-chair Laing noted that much had been said about the extraordinary cost of constructing parking and about the minimum and maximum parking ratios. He said the disconnect for him about the need for a maximum was that if it is so expensive to construct each stall and the market is going to decide, no sane developer would overpark a project and in the process waste money. The control of commuting behavior by limiting the supply of parking has nothing to do with the market or anything to do with what it costs to provide parking. Transportation and housing affordability are obviously inextricable. So it all comes down to the question of who the City is trying to say should not be allowed to commute to their job by automobile. Many of the service workers who

work in the Downtown Bellevue live in Ballard or Woodinville or other far-away places, and for the most part they commute by car. When asked directly, some of the workers talk about how many tips they have to get in order to pay for the bridge toll. Others talk about the parking games they play in Bellevue. The committee should be mindful of what the market really wants, and if that is parking then parking should be provided.

Mr. Guenther said he is a Downtown office tenant and represents others who are office tenants in the Downtown market. He said his office is in City Center Bellevue where there is a parking ratio of two stalls per thousand square feet with high demand. The building has four levels of parking, with two levels of valet parking. From the standpoint of tenants, they are having to do more with less as the office spaces become more dense, which is the reason for the high parking demand in the building. Tenants for Downtown Bellevue office space also look at options in Seattle where there is far better transit and a variety of building types and parking ratios. In Bellevue there should be no parking maximum. Developers who want to spend a lot of money on parking should be allowed to do so.

Mr. D'Amato agreed with Mr. Guenther. He said he owns a business and chose to move it into Downtown Bellevue. He said his employees want to work in Downtown Bellevue and if he were to move the company elsewhere many of them would leave. The City should shy away from enacting ordinances that prevent the subsidizing of parking for employees. Portland has a unique way of building parking garages and sharing the space with offices, so it is not exactly accurate to say new buildings there have no parking at all. Many work out deals with the city to provide parking in other ways.

Mr. Kelley said the majority of the public parking garages in downtown Portland are short-term biased and intended for retail users. There is some long-term parking but the rates are purposefully set pretty high. Mr. D'Amato said his company has an office in Portland where employees utilize off-site parking garages; they are only inconvenient to the extent they require walking a block or two to get to work but they seem to fill a niche. Bellevue does not have an oversupply issue.

Continuing, Mr. D'Amato said he would love to see a parking garage built somewhere near Old Bellevue. Small retail uses should be allowed to have no or very little required parking. The market should be permitted to determine how much parking is needed. A maximum parking ratio is not needed.

Mr. Ferris said as the owner of a small business he must think about the issue of parking for his employees. He said he also has developed several thousand units of housing in urban areas, mostly in Seattle and as such is familiar with the changes in parking ratios that have occurred over the last ten years. It was not long ago that the parking ratio in Seattle for residential was 1.25 stalls per unit; a number of mixed use housing developments were constructed with that ratio and the result was empty parking stalls. Seattle then lowered the parking ratio to one stall per unit, more mixed use housing was developed under that standard, and there were still empty parking stalls. Seattle now has no parking requirement for residential developments that are served by transit. The

market is generally building to a ratio of about 0.5 stalls per unit and there are still empty parking stalls. Bellevue could spend the next decade lowering its parking requirements and the results would likely be the same. To own a car costs about \$7,000 per year calculating in the cost of the car, insurance, parking and upkeep. A person paying \$700 per month is paying roughly an equal amount to have a car. A person can substantially lower their cost of living by choosing to live in an urban area served by transit and choosing not to own a car. Statistics show that fewer coming of age are even getting a drivers license, and of those who do many are finding it less expensive to rent a car for a weekend or when otherwise needed than it is to own a car. The City should do away with its parking requirements in areas served by transit, which in Bellevue is primarily the Downtown, and there should be no minimum parking requirements at all for residential. That would allow the market to determine how much parking is needed. A nice side benefit would be that housing could be made more affordable.

Continuing, Mr. Ferris noted that guest parking is an issue in urban environments. From a management point of view, guest parking is difficult to facilitate given that most of the parking is secured. Many places issue passes good for a given length of time to accommodate guest parking while still keeping the parking area secure. There should not, however, be any regulations requiring guest parking; the market should be allowed to decide if it is needed.

With regard to office, Mr. Ferris said the Urban Land Institute in Seattle has a study out on the high cost of free parking. He said the focus is on the behavior created by providing free parking. Persons who are given free parking will always choose to drive their cars; they will not choose transit. Their trips create environmental impacts, traffic congestion, and causes jurisdictions to spend more on roadway solutions. Developers may choose to build to high maximum parking ratios, but the people who get to use it are likely those who are the most highly compensated, and under that scenario in time only the wealthy will be driving cars into the City. Over time the City should find a way to incrementally reduce the parking maximums and should get rid of the minimums.

Mr. Bannon asked how market demand is actually determined. Mr. Meyers said the parking ratios in the code reflect the experience of like uses from across the nation, but they do not necessarily reflect the actual need. There are all manner of experts with data on the amount of parking different uses need. The market should be allowed to decide, but to simply say no parking is required could have big implications, particularly for the larger community over the long term. Regulations are in part a way for cities to force developers to do what is right for their community.

Mr. Su observed that there are some 48,500 parking stalls in the Downtown, with 42,525 people working in the Downtown. That means there are more parking stalls than workers. Most developments in the Downtown have both residential and retail, the latter of which needs parking only for a limited number of hours per day. He said his buildings include short-term parking and valet parking during peak hours. It would make sense for the City to encourage owners to share parking.

Mr. Meyers said 60,000 people per day come to the Bellevue Collection to shop. The important thing to understand about the parking/traffic/transit issue is that it is not a commuter problem, it is all about retail. Downtown Bellevue has 300,000 in and out trips daily. In 20 years the projection is that there will be 600,000 per day, and most of them will not be commuters. The workforce in the Downtown is expected to double over the next 20 years, so where there are 40,000 now there will be about 80,000, but that will still be only a fraction of the total number of trips. Parking for office is important, but not nearly as important as parking for everything else.

Mr. Su agreed, but pointed out that the congestion problem cannot be fixed by adding more parking.

Mr. Schooler agreed with Mr. Meyers. He said no matter how much data is available, it will still come down to a judgment call on the part of developers. Parking ratios probably are needed as controversial as they sometimes are, but the City should not wait 20 or 30 years before reviewing its parking requirements. Everything changes over time, including transit services. Where they increase, less parking is needed, and where they decrease, more parking is needed. Light rail is coming to Bellevue, but just what it will do for the City is yet to be determined. Density is coming to Bellevue, and lifestyle changes are already occurring, and in the long run that will drive down the general demand for parking.

Ms. Jackson cautioned against being overly optimistic about transit. The current view is that transit service will be reduced in the short term. The voters have in many instances refused to increase taxes to support transit. Light rail is coming, but bus service will be needed to connect the rest of the City. Transit may in the long run be a less expensive option over cars, but it is not always convenient. Currently many of the workers and Downtown residents are young and focused on their jobs and having fun, but as they grow older they will have families with kids who need recreation or need to go to the doctor or any other number of places, trips that will not be convenient by public transportation. If residential development is allowed without a minimum parking requirement, guests will be parking on the streets, displacing retail and restaurant traffic, or they will try to park in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Chaplin asked what thinking was behind eliminating the minimums and maximums for hotels in favor of requiring a parking study. Community Development Manager Patti Wilma said the change was prompted by the Marriot being built on 110th Avenue NE and NE 3rd Street. The developer team provided factual information which challenged the code requirements. Hotels are unique facilities with varying uses for which a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate. The code was changed to allow hotels to base their parking needs on parking studies focused on similar uses.

Mr. Chaplin commented that Downtown Bellevue is less than half developed. The City is looking to entice companies, retailers and residents to come to locate in the Downtown core which taken together will create a density that may have different parking needs.

The issue is how to balance that and not put restrictions on parking that might have a negative cause and effect impact down the road.

Mr. D'Amato suggested one opportunity might be to establish public parking on the east side of I-405 with shuttles bringing people into the Downtown. All major cities have public parking garages and they should be in the mix in Bellevue as well.

Ms. Maxwell said Downtown livability includes parking and reliable public transportation options. Shared parking makes a great deal of sense as a way to keep cars off the roadways.

Mr. Schooler reported that 25 years ago he served on an economic viability committee for the City. The top two recommendations of the group were to expand the convention center and its parking, and to create public parking on the edge of Downtown Park to benefit the Old Bellevue area.

Mr. Bannon agreed that parking for retail and restaurant users in Old Bellevue is a big issue. The committee needs a better understanding of the dynamics around what is needed for parking in that area and how the current regulations are playing out.

Mr. Su suggested that no public parking garage has been built in the Downtown because there has been a lot of free parking available. The private sector is unlikely to build a public parking garage unless it can charge a sufficient amount for the service. The bigger question is whether or not the City wants more parking or less parking. He said Sound Transit will not be a final solution to the problem.

Answering a question asked by Mr. D'Amato, Mr. Su said his buildings do not provide guest parking. He explained that he does provide parking for staff, and during the evening hours, those and the retail parking spaces are available for guest. Management of the parking spaces is key.

Co-chair Simas asked if there are examples of cities that have gone to zero parking minimums in which it did not turn out well. Mr. Meyers said there are some jurisdictions that have gone down that road, and in some cases they relied on the parking available at a major mall. Kemper Development Company is concerned that if Downtown buildings do not provide enough parking, patrons will choose to park at Bellevue Square instead.

Mr. Kelley said he did not have any stories of developers coming into town, constructing a building without parking and then selling out and leaving town. No parking minimums can work in highly dense urban areas where car ownership is very low, though they do have some impact on the public parking supply. There is no magic wand for predicting market demand. Not all uses have the same parking demands. Retail and cultural uses should be favored in terms of parking. What Bellevue needs to do is decide what kind of place it wants to be in 20 or 30 years and then recognize that it will not get there overnight. There should be no competition with the lowest common denominator in terms

of providing office parking. The market should be left to determine what the minimum parking requirement should be.

Mr. Schooler said he would not get rid of parking minimums altogether. Determining parking needs is more intuitive than scientific.

Ms. Lopez agreed that Bellevue needs to decide what it wants to become, and she agreed that the regulations need to be reevaluated more frequently. Bellevue will not in the next 10 or 20 years be a New York or Paris in terms of density. The City will also not in that time have the transit needed to support that density. For the near future there needs to be a focus on what it will take to keep Bellevue vital, and that includes accommodating vehicles with some level of parking.

Mr. Kelley agreed but cautioned about taking a fully hands off approach. Part of public policy should be pushing the market a little bit based on the long-term vision for the City.

Mr. Meyers said at the end of the day livability is what is being sought. Bellevue is and will continue to be a very different city from Portland or Seattle, but it will have a denser Downtown core. Public transportation options hopefully will improve dramatically, but the car is still going to be part of the picture. The idea of livability includes sustainable choices.

Strategic Planning Manager Emil King said staff was looking for direction from the committee on what precise items relating to parking should go into the alternatives process. It will set the stage for technical analysis to occur on the alternatives identified by the committee along with the pros and cons for each option. This work will all be brought before the committee for more discussion and review once the analysis is complete.

Mr. Ferris noted that the memo from staff references a modeling tool called Right Size Parking. The model takes into consideration employment location, the services people need and transit to evaluate demand. With all the information plugged in, the tool leads to a lower parking ratio for Downtown Bellevue than what the minimum is. Lowering the parking requirements can result in more affordable housing units.

Mr. D'Amato agreed the parking ratios could be reduced but suggested it should be done on a rational basis, such as a solid study. He agreed it would result in reduced construction costs.

Ms. Maxwell reiterated her desire to see the parking issues in Old Bellevue specifically addressed.

Mr. Guenther suggested that overall the system is not broken, it just needs some tweaking. There should be no maximum requirement because if a developer wants to build more they should be allowed to do so, especially if they believe the market is asking for more.

Mr. Ferris said the problem is the transportation infrastructure in the City is not designed to support the parking maximum that is currently in the code. If the maximum is to be retained, the City will need to spend more money on roads.

Co-chair Simas asked the committee members if they wanted to continue discussing the issue or if they believed staff had been given enough direction to proceed toward the alternatives workshop.

Mr. Ferris said his preference was to keep the process moving along. He said it would be easier to talk about parking in depth when comparing it to other alternatives.

Mr. King said the next major milestone is the alternatives workshop. The committee has worked through all of the major modules and has been provided with written materials regarding some of the minor topics. The alternatives workshop will need about four hours and staff thinks the meeting should be scheduled for January. The key policy issue will be highlighted for each topic, along with the committee discussions to date summarized in bullet points. The meat of the workshop will be the committee's review and discussion of a draft range of alternatives strategies for each topical area.

There was discussion about giving the committee members sufficient time to review the analysis information ahead of the alternatives workshop. There was agreement to have the alternatives workshop on January 15.

## 5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Bruce Nurse, 575 Bellevue Square, spoke on behalf of Kemper Development Company. He said he came to City Hall at 7:00 p.m. for the meeting and found no parking available. He said he drove over to Meydenbauer Center and was greeted by a sign saying parking there is only for events, and when it is available sometimes the gate closes at 11:00 p.m. and sometimes at 9:00 p.m. Everyone knew City Hall was underparked when it was remodeled, but that is in line with the policy the committee has been talking about. He said it was possible for him to walk six minutes from his house, catch a bus that would take him to the transit center, then walk another six minutes or so to City Hall, provided he was in sync with the buses. Driving to City Hall takes only a few minutes, though looking for parking can take quite a while.

Mr. Walter Scott, 400 112th Avenue NE, spoke on behalf of Legacy Companies. Parking is an important issue and its availability relates to economics and the cost of building it. With a large lot, parking can require fewer levels, which is a cost saving. To have to go deeper into the ground always costs more. Parking is a necessary evil, but a good place to put it is adjacent to the freeway near transit. Legacy Companies intends to build on the Coco's site, but Sound Transit wants to use the site for three years for construction staging. The light rail line will be at an elevation of almost 60 feet by the time it reaches the east end of the parcel. He shared with the committee members schematic drawings of what is planned. The original intent was to build a slotted development with two or three



towers with public plazas between them. If Sound Transit takes the property the amount of land on which to build will be greatly reduced, and the rail line may increase vagrancy.

Mr. Carl Vander Hoek with Vander Hoek Corporation said until recently he was in full agreement with the notion that the market should be allowed to control how much parking is needed. He said his company is planning a development and would, if operating alone, construct a good supply of parking. However, the out of town partners have different ideas based on their experiences elsewhere and cost. They want to see no more parking constructed than what the code requires. Where an insufficient supply of parking is created, company employees end up parking where customers should be parking. Many who work in the Downtown need a vehicle during the day for various reasons. There should be no reductions in the minimum parking requirements.

6. ADJOURN

Co-chair Simas adjourned the meeting at 9:53 p.m.